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SOME

PAPERS

Giving an Account of the

RISE and PROGRESS

OF

METHODISM

AT

*Wednesbury in Staffordshire, and
other Parishes adjacent:*

As likewise of the late RIOT in those Parts.

LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBERTS in *Warwick-Lane.*

M DCC XLIV.

S O M E

P A P E R S

Giving an Account of the

Rise and Progress

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W H I C H I S I N G R A D U A L L Y
G R O W I N G A M O N G S T U S

A S H E W N I N T H E F O L L O W I N G P A G E S

B O W D O W

PRINTED AT THE PRESS OF J. B. BOWEN

M DCCCXXXI

Advertisement.

THE following Papers have been received from some credible Persons residing in and about the Places mentioned in them. They contain Facts that are generally reported there, and believed by the Relators to be true, though they were not Eye-witnesses themselves of several of them. However, as they discover some Matters of Consequence both to Church and State, it is thought proper to communicate them to the Publick, and submit them to the Consideration of those that are in Authority.

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Giving an Account of the
Rise and Progress of *Methodism*, &c.

IN the Beginning of *November* 1742, or near to that Time, Mr. *Charles Westley* and a young Clergyman, whose Name is *Greaves*, first made their Appearance in *Wedgesbury*. When Notice of their coming was first given to the Inhabitants, it was said Mr. *Westley* was to be sent among them, in order to reform

reform the Colliers, and other illiterate and ignorant Persons; and Intimations were given that a Charity School was designed to be built and endow'd at *Wednesbury*, wherein poor Children should be instructed and train'd up in the Principles and Practice of the Christian Religion. Mr. *Charles Westley* is said to have made the strongest Affeверations to the then Vicar, that nothing should be done by him or his Followers to alienate the Affections of the People from him, (the Vicar) or to withdraw them from the Church of *England*, but that it should be their constant Endeavour to unite them more strongly to both. By these, and such like specious Pretences, the People became prejudiced in their Favour, and received them gladly. Mr. *Westley* preached publickly in the Streets and Fields, and drew great Numbers of People after him.

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He told them he did not come to collect Money among them, or to draw any thing from them; but only to instruct them in the Purity of the Christian Doctrine: And to confirm this, a Person who accompanied him, gave a Guinea to be distributed in Bread among the Poor, and did some other Acts of Charity. Mr. *John Westley* came next, about six Weeks afterwards. He preached publickly, as his Brother had done; and before he left them, proposed the establishing of a Society; (which Society at present, in *Wednesbury* and in the neighbouring Parishes, consists of near Two hundred People) into which each Person that enter'd was to pay a certain Sum, and to subscribe weekly, according to his Ability: He likewise proposed a Subscription amongst them towards building a Place of Worship or a

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Tabernacle, as they rather chose to call it. These Propositions differing very widely from what had been declared at the first setting out, began to open the Eyes of the serious and thinking Sort of People. After Mr. *John Westley*, came one *Williams*, a Man not in Orders, but said to be sent by Mr. *John Westley*, and to come from *Wales*, who in his publick Harangues vilified the Orders of the Church of *England*, and the whole Body of the Clergy, calling them dumb Dogs, that would not bark; and that they pretended, when they offer'd themselves for Holy Orders, to be moved by the Holy Ghost, but that it was all a mere Farce, and that they knew nothing of the Influence of that Holy Spirit. After him came a Bricklayer, and then a Plumber and Glazier, both said to come from *London*,

don, who Both publicly prayed and usurp'd the Office of a Preacher. Every three Weeks or Month, one of the Mr. *Westleys*, or of the other Persons now mentioned, came amongst them. Some of the Doctrines that they propagated, were, That every Person must have an absolute Assurance of his Salvation, or he would certainly be damn'd; That all who did not adhere to, and follow them, were not in a State of Salvation; and that this had been the Case of our Forefathers for several Generations past; That every true Christian did arrive at such a Degree of Perfection, as to live entirely free from all Sin; and that those who had not made this Progress, were no Christians at all; That every Person must receive the Holy Ghost in a sensible Manner, so as to feel and distinguish all its seve-

ral Motions, which sometimes would be quite violent. In consequence of which Doctrine, several People, either through the Force of Imagination, Enthusiasm, or Hypocrisy, would fall down in Fits, under violent Agitations of Body, and make strange hideous Noises. This their Preachers called Conviction, which when they had been under for some time, they then received the Holy Ghost, and were assur'd of their Salvation. The ill Effects of these Doctrines soon appeared: Instead of that Peace, Charity, and Good-will, which their Preachers boasted to be the Fruits thereof; Malice, Spleen, and endless Feuds, sprang up in their room. The *Methodists* became prejudiced against their lawful Minister, and spoke ill-natur'd and unjustifiable things of him. They likewise, upon every

Dispute

Dispute they had with their Neighbours of the Church of *England*, would tell them they were eternally damn'd, and even Children would tell their Parents the same. These things exasperated illiterate and unthinking People, and have been the principal Cause of all the Disturbance that has since happen'd. The first Insult was given to a small Party of *Wednesbury* Methodists, as they returned from *Darlaston* singing their Hymns, where they had been at an appointed and stated Place of Meeting: The Persons who assaulted them were *Darlaston* People, who beat and abused the *Methodists*, by flinging Stones and Dirt at them. The *Methodists* applied to a Justice of the Peace, and he granted them a Warrant on this Occasion; but upon hearing the Matter, he told them that they themselves had been the first

first Beginners, and the chief Cause of the Tumult, and might therefore thank themselves for what had happen'd. Some Time after this, about the middle of Summer, there arose a Mob, consisting of *Darlaston* and *Walsal* People, and some from *Bilston*, who broke the Windows of most of the *Methodists* Houses in *Wednesbury*, *Darlaston*, and *West-Bromwich*. After this their Teachers did not come near them for some Time. The first that came were *Greaves* and *Williams*, who preached only in private Houses. In a little Space after that Mr. *John Westley* ventured again; and the Mob, hearing of it, beset the House where he was, took him Prisoner, and carried him to the House of a Justice of Peace; but the Justice not caring to act in the Affair, did not think fit to be seen: so the Mob returned with their

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Prisoner, and after some Insults offered him they set him at Liberty again. After that *Greaves* and *Williams* ventur'd to preach publickly as usual; and in *Christmas* 1743, Mr. *Whitfield* coming to *Birmingham*, where there is likewise a Society, was invited over to *Wednesbury*, where he publickly preached in the Streets for several Days. At last, on *Saturday* the 4th of *February* 1743, Mr. *Charles Westley* and *Williams* came to *Wednesbury*, which was soon spread abroad; and it was rumour'd that a Mob would rise on that Occasion on the *Tuesday* following, being *Shrove-Tuesday*. Upon which Mr. *Westley* and *Williams* went off on the *Monday*; and on the Day following, the Mob, about half of which were said to be *Colliers*, consisting chiefly of *Darlaston* People, and some from *Bilston*, came
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to *Wednesbury*, forcibly enter'd the Houses of several *Methodists*, ransack'd, tore to Pieces, and carried off their Goods; and what they could not carry off they spoiled, notwithstanding several neighbouring Gentlemen personally appear'd, and used their utmost Endeavour to disperse them. The next Day the Mob rose again, went as far as *Aldridge* about five Miles off, and committed the same Outrages there; and intended to have proceeded in the same Manner through all the neighbouring Places, where there were any *Methodists*; but *Wednesbury* and *Walsal* raised a Mob against them, which being superior in Number, over-aw'd and dispersed them; and all has remained quiet ever since. The Damage done by this Mob, according to the best Information

formation amounts to Five Hundred Pounds or upwards.

P. S. *The Mob threatned to pull down the Houses of two of the Gentlemen who endeavour'd to persuade them to disperse, and go to their own Homes.*

Febr. 24. 1743.

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An E X T R A C T

Of some other P A P E R S relating
to the same.

THE Times of the Meetings of the *Methodists* are twice every Day; but on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays* thrice, at five o'Clock in the Morning, at Noon, and seven at Night. [No body is admitted on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, without a Ticket.] They are divided into Classes, each Class consisting of twelve Persons and their Leader, whose Business it is to enquire into the State of the Souls of his Class. After such Enquiry, he [the Leader] makes a Prayer for them; when that is end-

ed, he tells them they are all pardon'd. After this he exhorts them to give him what Money they can spare, that he may deliver it to the Steward. One of their Leaders, as appears from a Paper attested, and sign'd by the Person concern'd, then indisposed, told him in a Visit that he [the Leader] had made a Prayer for him at Home, in which he had begg'd of God Almighty to give him an *Answer*, and that he had with much Difficulty received a slight one; and added, if you will now tell me your Sins, you will be pardon'd, and then you will be fit to die. The same Leader, after several of their Preachers had held forth for a long Time at one of their Meetings, called for an *Answer*, and said, Good Lord, let not one depart without an *Answer*, an *Answer*, I say, three times over. Another ordinary Person is reported to have said whilst he

he was praying in a certain *Methodist's* House, Thou, O Lord, knowest that I know that my Sins are forgiven me. A little before *Shrove-Tuesday* last, Mr. *Charles Westley* haranguing his Audience, told them, That he was afraid on *Tuesday* following most of them would desert Christ. But, said he, to strengthen your Faith, I was once in a Mob myself; a Man struck me, and immediately God Almighty wither'd away his Hand, so that he lost the Use of it.---As to the immediate Occasion of the late Riot, it is apprehended to be owing in a great measure to the following Accident. The Wife of a certain Collier, a little before *Christmas*, 1743, was missing from his House about a Week, without any Difference between him and her, and was found by him at one of the Class-Houses; some Time after which she absented herself again
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for several Days, and was found again with some of the *Methodists*, and particularly a Teacher among them. It is likewise said, that a little after her first Absence, she and another Woman in their return from *Wednesbury* to *Darlaston* were much abused; upon which the Husband of one of them got a Warrant from a Justice of the Peace to apprehend the People that had so abused them, and served several of the Mob with the Warrant; but the Justice not acting in the Affair, the Mob assembled together upon *Shrove-Tuesday*; and after some Acts of Violence had been committed at *Darlaston* and *Wednesbury*, they declared publickly to the *Methodists* at *Wednesbury*, that if they [the *Methodists*] would subscribe a Paper, *viz.* That they would not assemble as usual, nor encourage *Westley*, or any other *Methodist* Teacher,

Teacher, they [the Mob] would disperse. And they are likewise said to have told the *Methodists*, that they [the *Methodists*] met on purpose to promote the Interest of Popery, and to bring in the *Pretender*. And when some neighbouring Gentlemen, who had been solicited to quell the Mob, were endeavouring to effect the same, the Mob told the said Gentlemen, that they [the Mob] were doing what the Soldiers shortly would do; and that if they [the Gentlemen] endeavour'd to stop them [the Mob] they were Enemies of his Majesty, and Friends of the *Pretender*: And farther, That when the Mob were plundering the Goods of the *Methodists*, and were about seizing some Malt, (the Property of one of the *Methodists*) as soon as they were told that that Malt was seized for his Majesty's Use for
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Non-payment of Duty, they [the Mob] immediately cried out, *God bless his Majesty*; and repeating what they had said before about the *Methodists* favouring Popish Pretensions, they accordingly left the Malt untouched. - - - The *Methodists* refusing to sign the aforesaid Paper, the Mob proceeded to rifle and plunder the Houses of several of them in *Wednesbury* and *West-Bromwich*; and assembling again the next Day, they proceeded to *Aldridge*, and committed the same Outrages there. Upon their Return from *Aldridge* they came through *Walsal* loaded with Household-Goods, Wearing-Apparel, &c. Several Persons in *Walsal* rose against them, stripp'd them of their Plunder, lodg'd it at a Publick House, and sent to the Persons rifled to come and own their Goods; upon which they were deliver'd

liver'd to them that own'd them. After meeting with this Resistance, the Mob threaten'd to pull down the Houses of those neighbouring Gentlemen who had endeavour'd to quell the Riot. They then remain'd quiet for some time, but have lately threaten'd to rise again, and plunder every body without Distinction; and the Neighbours are under continual Apprehensions, that unless some Care be taken to suppress both the *Methodists* and the Mob, these Menaces will be put in Execution.

March 12. 1743.

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March 1743

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Of another Account of the M E-
T H O D I S T S, viz. at *Birming-*
ham, Warwickshire.

IT is about two Years since the
First of this Denomination made
his Appearance at *Birmingham*.
His Name was *Ball*. He held forth
upon a little Green at the Town's
End, call'd *Goestey-Green*, and had
a numerous Audience. Curiosity
will always lead People to see
strange Sights, and few there
were who attended him from any
other Motive. This Gentleman
proposed a Collection for building a

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Place

Place of Worship; (I think it was in *Cambridgeshire*.) His Proposal met with no Encouragement, and he soon left *Birmingham*. It is very currently reported, that, not long after, he was committed to Goal for some Offence of a civil Nature. The next who came to *Birmingham* was Mr. *Charles Westley*. He Preach'd in the Streets for the first time on *Whitsunday* last; and has since made several Visits there. The last time he Preach'd in this publick Manner was upon the *Sunday* before *Lent*, nor do I hear that he has been in Town since. He planted himself in the *Bull-ring*, near the old Church. As soon as he began, the People set the Bells a ringing, which drown'd his Voice, and prevented him from being heard at any great Distance. He continued his Preaching till the Mob began to pelt him with Dirt, Turnips, &c. Mr. *Whit-*

Whitfield was at *Birmingham* about *Christmas* last, and you may suppose that great Numbers would, out of Curiosity, flock to hear a Man that had been so much talk'd of. He was invited hither by a Dissenter. His Stay was not of above a Week or ten Days at the most, and towards the last his Auditors were not so numerous, and the Behaviour of some of them not over and above civil. Soon after him came a young Man who was not in Orders. He held forth but once, and then but for a very short Time, being obliged by the Treatment he met with to take into a House for his Security. Since the *Wednesbury* Riot there have been here no publick Preachings. As to the Number of their Converts, I don't find them to be near so numerous as was at first apprehended; and those Few of them that were of
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the Communion of the Established Church are in general very regular in their Behaviour, and in their Attendance at Church. The Dissenters constitute the greater Number, and are their greatest Admirers, particularly of Mr. *Whitfield*. About *Wednesbury*, it is said, some of their Converts have been raised into strange unaccountable Extasies; but I cannot find there have been any of the like Practices at *Birmingham*. It is very probable that when once the *Methodists* have lost the Recommendation of Novelty, they will dwindle to nothing at *Birmingham*, unless supported by those who have already without any just Cause separated from our Communion.

March 31. 1744.



F I N I S

